IN THE CLAIMS

Amend claims 17-22 and cancel claims 23-49 as set out in the following listing of the claims:

1. (Original) A decoding control apparatus for controlling a process to decode encoded data obtained as a result of a predictive encoding process, said decoding control apparatus comprising:

a picture detector for determining one or fewest possible pictures, which must be decoded first before decoding a picture to be displayed after an edit point set in said encoded data but are not to be displayed;

a start-point finder for finding a start point representing a timing to start a process to decode said one or fewest possible pictures determined by said picture detector even though said one or fewest possible pictures are not to be displayed;

a decoding controller for controlling processes, which are carried out by a plurality of decoders for decoding said encoded data in order to decode said encoded data, in picture units, on the basis of said start point; and

a selector for selecting one of pictures, which are obtained as results of said processes carried out by said decoders, on the basis of said edit point and for outputting said selected picture.

2. (Original) The decoding control apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising an edit-point detector for detecting said edit point set in said encoded data.

3. (Original) The decoding control apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said decoders are employed in said decoding control apparatus.

4. (Original) The decoding control apparatus according to claim 1, wherein, if said encoded

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data is encoded at an L-time decoding speed, where L is a positive number, the number of said

decoders is at least 7/L.

5. (Original) The decoding control apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said start-point

finder determines a timing leading ahead of a timing to start a process to decode a picture at said

edit point by at least a period of time it takes to decode all of said one or fewest possible pictures,

which are determined by said picture detector, for said edit point, as pictures not to be displayed,

as said start point.

6. (Original) The decoding control apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said encoded

data is data generated by encoding pictures in unit of a group including a plurality of pictures.

7. (Original) The decoding control apparatus according to claim 1, wherein:

each of said pictures include:

an Intra (I) picture encoded without referencing other pictures;

a Predictive (P) picture encoded by referencing a picture displayed previously; or

a Bidirectionally predictive (B) picture encoded by referencing both a picture displayed

previously and a picture to be displayed later, or by referencing either of the picture displayed

previously or the picture to be displayed later;

said one or fewest possible pictures, which are identified by said picture detector but not to

be displayed, are I or P pictures.

8. (Original) The decoding control apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said decoding

controller:

drives one of said decoders, which is currently not carrying out a decoding process, to start

a process to decode said encoded data with a timing of a new start point; and

drives said one of decoders, which has been carrying out said process to decode said

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encoded data by starting said process with said timing of said new start point, to stop said process to decode said encoded data with a timing of an edit point appearing next to said new start point.

9. (Original) The decoding control apparatus according to claim 8, wherein with said timing of an edit point appearing next to said new start point, said selector starts selecting pictures obtained as a result of said decoding process carried out by said one of said decoders, which has been carrying out said decoding process by starting said decoding process with said timing of said new start point.

10. (Original) The decoding control apparatus according to claim 1, said decoding control apparatus further comprising a reader for reading out said encoded data from a recording medium, on which said encoded data has been stored.

11. (Original) A decoding control method for controlling a process to decode encoded data obtained as a result of a predictive encoding process, said decoding control method comprising the steps of:

determining one or fewest possible pictures, which must be decoded first before decoding a picture to be displayed after an edit point set in said encoded data but are not to be displayed;

finding a start point representing a timing to start a process to decode said one or fewest possible pictures even though said one or fewest possible pictures are not to be displayed;

controlling processes, which are carried out by a plurality of decoders for decoding said encoded data in order to decode said encoded data, in picture units, on the basis of said start point; and

selecting one of pictures, which are obtained as results of said processes carried out by said decoders, on the basis of said edit point.

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12. (Original) The decoding control method according to claim 11, further comprising the step of detecting said edit point set in said encoded data.

13. (Original) The decoding control method according to claim 11 whereby, at said step of finding a start point, an operation is carried out to determine a timing leading ahead of a timing to start a process to decode a picture at said edit point by at least a period of time it takes to decode all of said one or fewest possible pictures, which are determined by said picture detector, for said edit point, as pictures not to be displayed, as said start point.

14. (Original) The decoding control method according to claim 11 whereby, at said step of controlling processes,

one of said decoders, which is currently not carrying out a decoding process, is driven to start a process to decode said encoded data with a timing of a new start point; and

said one of decoders, which has been carrying out said process to decode said encoded data by starting said process with said timing of said new start point, is driven to stop said process to decode said encoded data with a timing of an edit point appearing next to said new start point.

15. (Original) The decoding control method according to claim 14 whereby, with said timing of an edit point appearing next to said new start point, at said step of selecting one of pictures, an operation is started to select pictures obtained as a result of said decoding process carried out by said one of decoders, which has been carrying out said decoding process by starting said decoding process with said timing of said new start point.

16. (Original) The decoding control method according to claim 11, said decoding control method further comprising the step of reading out said encoded data from a recording medium, on which said encoded data has been stored.

17.(Currently Amended) A ~~program for driving a computer to carry out a decoding control~~

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~~process~~ <u>computer-readable medium encoded with instructions capable of being executed by a</u>

<u>computer</u> to control a process of decoding encoded data obtained as a result of a predictive

encoding process wherein said decoding control process comprises the steps of:

determining one or fewest possible pictures, which must be decoded first before decoding a

picture to be displayed after an edit point set in said encoded data but are not to be displayed;

finding a start point representing a timing to start a process to decode said one or fewest

possible pictures even though said one or fewest possible pictures are not to be displayed;

controlling processes, which are carried out by a plurality of decoders for decoding said

encoded data in order to decode said encoded data, in picture units, on the basis of said start

point; and

selecting one of pictures, which are obtained as results of said processes carried out by said

decoders, on the basis of said edit point.

18. (Currently Amended) The ~~program~~ <u>computer-readable medium</u> according to claim 17,

wherein said decoding control process further comprises the step of detecting said edit point set

in said encoded data.

19. (Currently Amended) The ~~program~~ <u>computer-readable medium</u> according to claim 17,

wherein at said step of finding a start point, an operation is carried out to determine a timing

leading ahead of a timing to start a process to decode a picture at said edit point by at least a

period of time it takes to decode all of said one or fewest possible pictures, which are determined

by said picture detector, for said edit point, as pictures not to be displayed, as said start point.

20. (Currently Amended) The ~~program~~ <u>computer-readable medium</u> according to claim 17,

wherein at said step of controlling processes,

one of said decoders, which is currently not carrying out a decoding process, is driven to

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start a process to decode said encoded data with a timing of a new start point; and

said one of decoders, which has been carrying out said process to decode said encoded data by starting said process with said timing of said new start point, is driven to stop said process to decode said encoded data with a timing of an edit point appearing next to said new start point.

21. (Currently Amended) The ~~program~~ computer-readable medium according to claim 20, wherein with said timing of an edit point appearing next to said new start point, at said step of selecting one of pictures, an operation is started to select pictures obtained as a result of said decoding process carried out by said one of decoders, which has been carrying out said decoding process by starting said decoding process with said timing of said new start point.

22. (Currently Amended) The ~~program~~ computer-readable medium according to claim 17 wherein said decoding control process further comprises the step of reading out said encoded data from a recording medium, on which said encoded data has been stored.

23-49 (Canceled)